

its author having retired from practice, whilst the objects of the establishment have outgrown the provision made for them by that design, and projections, indeed, having been made on, or from, one at least of the outer flanks of the building, and in extension of one of its fronts, to supply the advancing demands for room, while available space in the most convenient position, with regard to the establishment generally, remains unoccupied,—the author does not feel that he need be deterred any longer from stating formally and publicly the ideas which he had formed upon the subject.

Mr. Hosking's object is to show how space, left unoccupied by the existing buildings, may be applied to meet the demand which has grown up since they were designed; that is to say, to obtain more room for the reception and exhibition of the objects of the establishment without going beyond the site now occupied or embraced by the Museum, and to facilitate the access, to the objects already provided for, of the unaccounted number of persons who seek amusement and instruction within the walls of the Museum.

Mr. Hosking assumes that there can be no objection to the occupation, by buildings in addition to the Museum, of the now uncovered quadrangular court or cloister enclosed by the present buildings, so far as it may be done without injury to their light, inasmuch as that court does not come into use in its present condition, and does not contain any object of which it has been thought necessary to present any view from the buildings which make it a cloister. This quadrangle appears to be 317 feet in length and 238 feet wide, and none of the buildings fronting to and deriving light from it are as much in height above the level of the sills of the windows as one-fourth of the breadth of the quadrangle; whilst, as a general rule, the breadth between opposite buildings need not be more, as it regards light to the windows, than the height above their sills of the buildings opposite to them; and if, in the present case, the unoccupied ground be built upon in such manner only that the distance of any building from opposite windows be more nearly twice, than once, the height of the building above the sills of the windows liable to be affected, there can be no injurious effect produced upon the windows of the present buildings by any such occupation of the cloistered site.

Mr. Hosking assumes, too, that it will not be deemed an unreasonable interference with the present buildings to remove those parts of the outer walls to the quadrangular court with which any additional buildings may come in contact, for the purpose of intercommunication, and to restore the light now coming by windows, which such additional buildings, were brought into contact with the present buildings, would necessarily obliterate.

We give Mr. Hosking's proposition in his own words, as submitted to the Trustees in November last:—

"My project is, then, to build in the middle of the quadrangular court, inclosed by the present main buildings of the museum, in the manner shown in the accompanying plan, a modified copy of the Pantheon at Rome,—that is to say of the cupola-covered rotunda known by that name,—as nearly the full size as possible, consistently with the size of the area, and with the height of the present buildings, and so to form a grand central hall for the exhibition of the finer and more important works of sculpture, and of such other objects proper to the purposes of the Museum as most require that steady and equal light which is so well obtained from the eye of a cupola. A quadrilateral hall, to contain ample staircases, would lead from the present entrance vestibule of the Museum into the grand central hall or rotunda, and by the floor of the rotunda itself, or by a corridor about it to the east, west, and north galleries respectively, through new compartments added to them on the level of the floor of the lower or principal story of the Museum; and the staircases would lead up to a bridgeway or continued landing on the floor of the upper story, where another similar corridor about the rotunda would afford similar facilities of access to the upper, east, west, and north galleries, whilst the bridgeway would also make the communication complete to the south gallery. The formation of stair-

cases in the place and manner indicated would allow the space now occupied by the grand staircase to be restored to the purposes of the Museum, and thus make the circuit complete in both stories, whilst every part would be rendered, by the before-described arrangements, alike accessible from a common centre.

"In taking the Pantheon as a model for the grand central hall, it may be proper to observe that its proposed adaptation is perfectly consistent with the original design of that structure, which made it the centre of a more extended building, above the other parts of which its cupola rose, as the cupola might in this case rise, above the other parts of the Museum; for the design will be seen by the drawing* to carry the connecting galleries to no greater height than the height of the present buildings, with which, indeed, the fronts to the cloisters may be made to correspond in elevation. The Pantheon is 143 feet (English measure) in diameter upon the floor, and it is 143 feet high from the floor to the curb round the eye of the cupola; but as a full-sized copy would crowd the space, and, by its magnitude and height, overpower the existing buildings of the Museum, the present design limits the diameter of the rotunda, and consequently its height, to 120 feet, and giving more than an equivalent thickness to the inclosing walls—which are resolved externally into an octagonal form—takes out of the walls a corridor 10 feet wide, and obtains thereby nearly all the space upon the floor that a full-sized copy of the Pantheon would give.

"The accompanying plan shows that what is here proposed may, as first remarked, be effected without any derangement whatever of the original design of the building, while it adds new room and increased facilities to the Museum without going beyond the present inclosing walls. The plan of the present buildings is copied from the only plan accessible to the author,—that attached to the report of the Committee of the House of Commons, published in 1838. The portions of the present buildings required to be removed to receive the suggested additions are left in outline, and the suggested new buildings are shaded more faintly than those which now exist, and would remain undisturbed by the present scheme.

"The additional room which this project would give to the Museum is, 1st, The great central hall, with one floor of 120 feet in diameter, yielding an area nearly equal to twice the area of the present Athenian or Elgin Marbles Gallery; 2nd, Two inscribing octagonal corridors, each 10 feet wide, and each comprising an area of between four and five thousand superficial feet, and each also presenting niches fit to receive statues, and extensive wall surface fit to receive sculptured reliefs and inscriptions; and, 3rd, The connecting galleries on the east and west sides, each 45 feet by 35 feet, and in both stories; the north connecting gallery 65 feet by 50 feet in the principal story, and 35 feet by 50 feet in the upper story, and the site of the present staircase in both stories. This additional room may, the author believes, be obtained at a cost not exceeding that of any one of the existing sides of the Museum."

THE BUILDING PLANS FOR THE '51 EXHIBITION.

PARTICULARS FOR TENDERS.

ON Monday next, according to advertisement, the particulars will be obtainable by parties willing to tender for the erection of the proposed building.† It will be found that the works are divided into eight portions. Every tender must be accompanied by the schedule of quantities of the portions tendered for, fully priced and moneyed out, in a form supplied.

If a tender for labour, use, waste, maintenance, and removal, it must include the top-soiling of the site to as nearly as possible its present form, within a reasonable time after the removal of all the works.

Tenders for methods of construction other than those shown upon the drawings and described in the specification will be entertained, if accompanied by working drawings, and speci-

* The drawing includes longitudinal and transverse sections of the whole building, but these are of necessity omitted here.—Ed.

† The sum required to be paid for these particulars is too large.

fications, and fully-priced bills of quantities; but if any such tender shall not show clearly and truly the comparative cost of the system proposed and that shown upon the committee's drawings, &c., it will not be entertained.

All tenders are to be delivered at the Palace of Westminster on July 8, 1850.

The Commissioners are to be distinctly understood as not binding themselves to accept any tender, or to make any remuneration whatever for any tenders, or for any trouble or expense incurred.

If we were to say how many letters we have received respecting the award on the competition plans we should be open to a charge of exaggeration. One and all, without exception, coincide in our statement of the matter. The fact is now undeniable that the building committee have erred: too many cooks have spoiled the broth. The designs pointed out for greater honour are not those which have "been wholly or partially adopted," or have afforded "the most useful suggestions."

The secret history of the error is a curious one, and will one day perhaps be told. Some of the English competitors are exceedingly indignant, and propose the publication of a counter report. We insert two communications, selected from the batch.

In this case no premium has been offered—a shabby proceeding enough, in a matter where 150,000*l.* is to be expended. The designer of the work, the planner of the whole—the master spirit—is to have nothing, while the mechanical contractor will probably make a fortune. Still, however mean and shabby this may be, and although it is possible it has kept out of the competition many whose time is much absorbed—in fact, in their money,—nevertheless it is as fair for one who chooses to compete as for another, and on this account it the more behoves the committee to act with the strictest good faith. The man who strives for honour has deeper feelings, perhaps, than he who strives for money rewards. In the latter case, all the mischief done is the missing a payment; in the other, it is a painful failure. One man is exalted at the expense of another; one man humiliates the other. He does not merely draw the lucky number that gives him the prize, but he is supposed to *conquer* the other in the lists, and send him home wounded from the combat, and with arms reversed.

It is not my intention to remark on the general poverty of invention and the low character of the designs. Next to this, that which strikes the spectator the most is the utter disregard of the instructions. These are particularly stringent. Their language is not that of suggestion, but absolute command. "Must be," "must not be," in every line. Besides, we read this strong intimation,— "No communications inconsistent with these conditions, or any plans prepared upon a different scale from that prescribed, can be received." I think that instructions were never so set at defiance before. It is not my intention to inquire whether these conditions were well drawn or not. It is sufficient for us to know that they exist, and that those who have violated them have taken an unfair advantage over those who have complied with them. It would be like suffering some jockeys in a race to throw away the weights they carry, and compelling others to bear their full burden home to the weighing-stand. I contend, that with such instructions it was imperative on the committee first of all to go over the plans, and at once to put aside those in variance with their conditions. Instead of this, we have every requirement openly set at defiance. Instead of a temporary, economical building, the materials of which might be converted again with little loss, of given dimensions, within given spaces, to given scale, we have huge palaces, porticoes as large as that of the Exchange, sculpture, polychromy, copies of the Tuilleries and Invalides, buildings of permanent character and outrageously expensive construction, of double the height that could be needed, covering not half the required space, and utterly disregarding the plan, cast-iron ribs that would span St. Paul's, "bold construction," as the committee call it, the principal boldness of which appears to be the audacity which would offer such a design, and last, not least, drawings on several sheets, to several scales, and, worse than all, huge and expensive models. I do contend that all these should at once have been rejected, and that it is eminently unfair to those who have complied with the instructions, that their plans should be hung side by side by those who have utterly set them at naught.

But what is worse than this, the greatest offenders of all seem to be among the favoured eighteen selected for especial honour, as you have already shown. Of these, no less than ten do not give the quantity of space, some not half enough; five do